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a commission as a reserve officer, with the rank of major. A bronze bust, by Samuel Murray, of Dr. Keen in his uniform as an officer of Medical Corps, U. S. Army, was presented to him on behalf of the subscribers to the dinner, by Dr. William J. Taylor, president of the College of Physicians, and for many years his private assistant.

Dr. Keen responded in an admirable address which is printed in the issue of *Science* for February 11.

THE FOREST SERVICE

According to the annual report of Chief Forester W. B. Greeley, the receipts of the National Forests have increased 93 per cent. from 1915 to 1920, while the total appropriations for the Forest Service, exclusive of deficiency fire-fighting funds, has increased only 8 per cent. The receipts for 1920 were 10 per cent. greater than for 1919, and an equal increase for the current fiscal year may be expected, unless too much new business has to be rejected on account of lack of funds and trained employees. The appropriations for the current fiscal year were increased only 3 per cent.

In addition to the actual revenue, according to the report, there is an enormous return to the public through the protection of the 500,000,000-odd feet of timber for future use, the protection of the headwaters of innumerable feeders of navigation, irrigation and hydroelectric power and the recreational facilities made available to hundreds of thousands of people. "There will always be national resources not measureable in dollars which in public benefit exceed the receipts paid into the Treasury," the report says.

The purchases aggregated at the close of the fiscal year 1,420,208 acres in the White Mountains and the Southern Appalachians and 12,094 acres in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. The original program of

acquisition contemplated the purchase of about 1,000,000 acres in the White Mountains and not less than 50,000-000 acres in the Southern Appalachians. Nearly one half the proposed White Mountain area has been acquired, but slower progress has been made in the southern areas.

Further appropriations to carry on the purchase work within the areas have been recommended by the National Forest Reservation Commission. "To leave these Eastern forests in their present half finished condition would subject them to formidable fire hazards and other difficulties of management."

There is need also for some action to reduce the danger to the National Forests from the 24,267,723 acres of private lands that are intermingled with land belonging to the government. Most of this land is forested and its misuse, mismanagement and neglect jeopardize the government's holdings. General legislation is urged to acquire the private land by purchase or exchange.

The 1919 fire season was unusually severe and long drawn out, the report states. It was the third successive year of severe drought in the northwest, and the worst of the three. Fires began to occur before much of the customary work of preparation had been done, and this imposed a further handicap upon the forest force, which had been depleted by the loss of many experienced men. The total number of forest fires in the National Forests was 6,800, or 1,227 greater than in the previous year. The area of National Forest lands burned over was 2,000,034 acres, the estimated damage was \$4,919,769, and the total cost of fire fighting was \$3,039,615.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

We record with regret the death of William Thompson Sedgwick, professor of biology in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology since

1883; of Mary Watson Whitney, professor of astronomy emeritus, and from 1889 to 1910 director of the observatory of Vassar College; of Lincoln Ware Riddle, assistant professor of cryptogamic botany in Harvard University and associate curator of the Farlow Herbarium of Cryptogamic botany; of Sir Lazarus Fletcher, keeper of minerals in the British Natural History Museum from 1880 to 1909 and then director of the museum until 1919; and of Dr. Wilhelm Foerster, professor of astronomy at the University of Berlin, at one time director of the Observatory.

Dr. Wallace Walter Atwood, lately professor of physiography at Harvard University, was inaugurated as president of Clarke University, on February 1.

Dr. J. Norris Russell, of Princeton University, has been awarded the gold medal of the Royal Astronomical Society.

The Edison medal, awarded annually for work in electrical engineering by the American Institute of

Electrical Engineers, will be presented this year to Dr. M. I. Pupin, professor of electromechanics at Columbia University.

The third half-yearly report on the progress of civil aviation in England by the government, states that regular air services have now been established from London to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, and that passenger, mail and goods traffic is increasing. The total number of aeroplane miles flown in the half-year ending September 30, 1920, is nearly 700,000, whilst the aggregate since May, 1919, exceeds 1,000,000. The number of passengers by air exceeds 30,000, whilst the goods carried weigh little less than 90 tons. In value the imported goods exceed £500,000, whilst the exports and re-exports are about half that amount. As part of the mail services, about 50,000 letters have passed each way between London-Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. The fatal accidents are given as in the ratio of 1 per 50,000 miles flown or per 5,000 passengers carried.